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A PLEA FOR LEARNING.

A friend said to us, the other day, Is there not great danger, that, with the current of popular feeling setting so strong in favor of practical studies, the claims of learning in this working-day world of America will be lost sight of? Are we not running the risk of going to the other extreme in regard to practical science, and after unjustly neglecting and depreciating the study of physical phenomena as an element in education, shall we not now be too apt to forget the claims of scholarship and letters? "For," he went on to say, "you may talk as you please about your self-educated men and your physical philosophers; — they will be the first to tell you that their education lacks an essential element, the want of which none feel so much as themselves; that there is such a thing as culture as well as knowledge, and that culture and that indefinable grace by which we know an educated mind is given by those very linguistic and classical studies which are now so much decried. Look," said he, "at England's best scholars; — I grant all you say of the worthlessness of a great deal of what passes for education in England — but look at England's picked men, and where, save here and there in this country a solitary genius, can you find men to match them in the refinements and graces of true scholarship? Can we afford to do without scholar-

ship in this country? What people need it more to refine the vulgarity which seems inherent in a democratic community? Surely, instead of too much of it, we could afford to have a great deal more. For Heaven's sake do not strive to make that little less."

We have written strongly, as some of our readers know, in defence of the study of physical science as an absolutely essential element in popular education. We are not disposed to retract a word of all we have said on that side of the question, and yet we feel and entirely assent to the force of our friend's remonstrance. Not a little experience in teaching has given us an opportunity to appreciate the value of linguistic studies, and the refining influence of Literature, — using that term as is often done in contradistinction to science — and its absolute necessity as an element in any liberal education. We would be the last to discourage the cultivation of Literature or undervalue its elevating and purifying influence. We know how easy it is for the vulgar man of science to become a gross materialist, though we do not believe in any tendency in the study of Science rightly pursued to engender a materialistic philosophy.

But we think that though on this subject it is easy to go to extremes, and though we shall doubtless have many partial and one-sided thinkers, there is yet in this movement towards the cultivation of physical science, and the making it enter as a larger ingredient into our systems of education, a very healthy re-action against a narrow, hide-bound, pedantic and antiquated literary culture which really bore no fruit at all. Our higher education is not really of home growth. It was imported from England, and planted in New England by our Puritan fathers, as an education for their ministers, but it never took root here, and has never really formed a part of our American life. Bungling attempts have been made to conform it to that life, but with little success, and it now exists apart from the popular sympathies, and unincoporated, as are the lower grades of schools, into the national system.

Now, we are far from saying that this is because of the study of Latin and Greek, as many are swift to say in regard to it. We do not believe the evil would be remedied by the abolition of Latin

and Greek, and the turning of all our colleges into polytechnic schools, which we should reckon the most unfortunate of measures. We do not believe in any necessary antagonism between Learning and Science, Physics and Belles-Lettres. We surely do not want to see the physical philosopher become as unreasonable and one-sided as many of his opponents. A number of distinctions are to be carefully drawn on this subject before we can arrive at the truth, and reconcile the conflicting parties. We say *parties*, for between the *causes* there is really no conflict at all.

In the first place, it needs to be seen that there is no such thing as a uniform training for all minds: but that inasmuch as it has pleased the Creator to make minds of an infinite variety, so it behoves us to study that variety, and adapt our educational processes to it. No exclusive and one-sided education of any kind is good, a scientific as little as a classical; but the bent of the mind should surely be consulted, and nothing is more certainly proved by long and disastrous experience, than that the attempt to force an exclusively classical education on a very large class of minds is absolutely futile. Would we then replace it by an exclusively scientific education? In many instances we believe this would succeed better, but it would quite as much be open to the objection of one-sidedness; but surely we may say, that, given all the elements which constitute a complete education as ten, two different modes of mingling them may be conceived of, in one of which Science shall stand as six and Literature as four, and in the other Literature as six and Science as four, or in any other proportions according to the varying qualities and aptitudes of particular minds.

But, again, it is one thing to say that literature should enter as an ingredient into every complete and liberal education, and quite another thing to insist that in all cases literary studies should be represented by Greek and Latin. These two studies did once indeed stand as almost the only representatives both of Philosophy and of Belles-Lettres; but how different is the case now! Linguistic science has extended its limits far beyond the narrow bounds of the languages of Greece and Rome, especially as these were taught in the narrow and antiquated method of the older generation of English classical scholars, who have been to so great an

extent our models; and more than one modern literature now stands, whatever classical pedants may say, if not as their rivals, at least with an urgent claim to share the representation of Literature. We fear it would be a dangerous question to ask what are the real classical attainments of many of our best and most admired belles-lettres scholars. Does not one get his *real* training from Dante, another from Shakspeare, another from Goethe?

Especially do we think that the *English* language, destined as it is to extend its sway over all quarters of the globe, has a powerful claim to be considered one, at least, of the representatives of Literature in education. We disbelieve altogether that theory, so common once, that it is no consequence whether we study English systematically, provided only we study Latin thoroughly, — that can be the notion of a classical pedant only. On the contrary, we can conceive of one form, at least, of literary education into which Latin certainly shall enter, and a thorough study of it too, but not Latin for its own sake so much as for its uses, in the study of languages far more valuable than itself, and of the English first and foremost. Beyond such study let the cultivation of Latin verses and the commenting on Latin authors be not neglected, only left as a specialty and an elegant accomplishment to those minds which have a turn for them.

Again we must distinguish between the training which should constitute the foundation of popular, and that which should be at the basis of a learned or scholarly education. Now, though often confounded, we believe these two educations should be kept very distinct, and the distinction should be the very one we have mentioned, that popular education should contain a maximum of objective and scientific studies, while a learned education should be the reverse. If it were not for our stupid, pedagogic ways, the bent of a boy's mind would be very easily, and usually very early detected. If from the very infant school the child's mind had offered to it both kinds of mental food, that which is fitted to develop the senses and the love of outward nature, and that which tends to develop the æsthetic sense and the reflective faculties, the preponderating bent of the mind would soon show itself. The reason why it does not do so now is because boys destined for a

higher education, in order to conform to the absurd and unreasonable requisitions of our colleges, are fed exclusively from their tenth to their sixteenth year on Latin and Greek grammars and on abstract mathematics. The other side of their minds thus gets no opportunity to develop, and what wonder that so many turn out failures! Surely the advocates of the study of physical science are not to be called one-sided for wishing to change such a state of things as this.

We believe that if the study of Physical Science were recognized as it should be in education, so far from training the whole community into "atheistic physicists," a result which seems to be the bugbear of our classical friends, we should have more and not fewer classical and belles-lettres scholars, more historians, poets, essayists, dramatists — and better ones. For literature, relieved of the dead-weight of uncongenial minds, emancipated from being the slave-of-all-work in education, would be truly cultivated by those who loved it; while we should also have what the country sadly needs in this generation, a multitude of men of far-reaching scientific attainments to develop her vast material resources, and another greater multitude equipped with that solid, practical and serviceable education which is useful in order to fight the tough battle of life honorably and well as plain citizens of a free country.

As for the English scholarship of which so much is said, we would not deny its beauty and its charm in those exceptional cases where great natural talents are combined with *true* classical culture. But the number of such real scholars is, we imagine, small compared with the number of utter ignoramuses or of useless and conceited prigs whom Oxford and Cambridge annually turn out upon the world. The scholarship even of the best smells of the monkish cloister, except in those rare cases where great natural genius, and powers which would have made their way under any circumstances, and early and extensive acquaintance with the world, have cured its weaknesses and defects. We want scholarship surely; but it seems to us that in this country we want a scholarship which, while its standard shall be as high, shall be of a robuster make. We doubt about that dogma of the necessary

vulgarity of democracies; is it not rather that the culture of aristocracies is finical and effeminate? We want universities; but surely we do not want American Oxfords.—[Ed.

HINTS ON TEACHING.

No. 2. — Aims in Teaching.

In my first article I stated that the teacher should have four grand aims. 1. To cultivate the power to acquire knowledge. 2. To cultivate a disposition to acquire it. 3. To impart knowledge. 4. To teach how to use it. The first and second I have already considered, and I pass to the remaining two.

As to imparting knowledge, there is much less of it done by most teachers than is commonly supposed. Often mere words and forms of expression are lodged in the memory, with little or no knowledge of the facts or ideas which they are intended to communicate. Teaching is very often mere recitation-hearing, the pupil being required to repeat accurately what he finds in the text-book, the teacher deeming it his chief, perhaps his only duty to see whether the recitation be correct. This is all wrong. *Thought about things* is necessary to make knowledge, and the evoking of thought in the pupil should therefore be the main object in the recitation. It will not do to presume that he thinks, much less that he thinks correctly. The teacher must himself think, and imbue the class with his thoughts, and wake up thought in their minds; and then apply tests to see whether the thinking is actually done. All this implies mental labor in the teacher, while mere recitation-hearing does not.

A strictly memoriter recitation, however correct, is never to be trusted as indicating that the pupil understands the subjects about which he recites. This rule should be adopted by every teacher, and yet it is extensively transgressed, and in some schools entirely disregarded. Teachers are very apt to take it for granted that scholars understand the meaning of what they have committed to memory. I will give but two out of many illustrations of this, which have

come under my observation. Hearing, on my visit at a school, a recitation of a lesson in geography, in which such expressions as *diversified scenery* and *rolling country* were used, I asked some questions, in order to discover whether the pupils understood what these signified, and found that none of them had the remotest idea of their meaning, although all could repeat the lesson almost word for word, and therefore made what is called a good recitation. The other is from a class in arithmetic, who were reciting in square measure. I asked them if they could any of them tell me what the difference is between a foot and a square foot. No hand was raised, and the blank, bewildered expression on the countenances of the whole class showed that none of them could answer the question. However, in order to give them a full opportunity to develop what they did know, I asked if any of them could draw on the blackboard, first a foot, and then a square foot. Several of the class now held up their hands, and the teacher selected a very bright-looking boy to go to the blackboard. As he began by drawing a curved instead of a straight line, I asked him what he was making. "A heel, sir," said he. The teacher was astonished at this display of the ignorance of her pupils, for she supposed that they would know, as a matter of course, what inches and feet and square inches and square feet are, without being taught what they are explicitly by her. I will give just here an item of experience from another teacher, who very rationally acted upon the contrary supposition. A little girl said to her, on entering the school-room, "I cannot learn long measure. I have tried very hard, but I cannot do it." In the course of the afternoon the teacher, by the aid of a carpenter's rule, which she had borrowed for the purpose, taught her pupils what inches, feet, yards, etc., are. When the recitations came to be heard this girl recited as well as any one, and the teacher said to her, "Why did you say that you could not learn long measure?" "Because then," replied she, "I did not know what it is, but now that I understand it, it is easy enough to learn it."

Mere memoriter recitation is not confined to schools of lower grades, but is often practised in high schools, and even in colleges. A very interesting example of it is given in the life of Prescott

the historian. For some of the English studies, as the higher metaphysics, he had a hearty disrelish, but his remarkable memory enabled him to get along with them very comfortably, because he understood them to some little extent. But of Geometry and Mathematics he did not understand even a little, so that here his recitations must be sheer exercises of the memory. In these, however, he succeeded perfectly, committing to memory long mathematical demonstrations, word for word, and letter for letter. But after trying this for a while, and having some amusement from it with a few friends who were in the secret, tiring of the farce, he went to the professor and told him the truth, and succeeded in making an arrangement by which he was excused from this mere rote recitation.

This making the memory such a common pack-horse in education, as is very commonly done, while it may have a great show of accumulating knowledge and furnish very creditable examinations, is really one of the greatest obstacles to the accumulation of knowledge. It is so not merely at the time, but during all after life; for it creates, and if continued for any length of time establishes, a superficial habit of mind, which allows the memory to store up words and expressions with, but at the most, shadowy ideas of their meaning.

The methods by which knowledge should be imparted, my limits will not permit me to consider, and I now pass to the fourth aim in teaching — to teach how to use knowledge.

Failing to teach in the school how to use knowledge, is as great an error as it would be for a mechanic to content himself with teaching his apprentices the qualities of the materials they are to work upon, and of the tools they are to work with, neglecting all practical training of them in the use of these materials and tools. All of the uses of knowledge cannot, it is true, be taught in the school, but most of them can be, to some extent, and should be in justice to the pupil.

First, the pupil should be taught how to use his knowledge in what is commonly called business. To this end it should be put into as practical a form as possible. The processes of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry should be applied to practical uses continu-

ously as the pupil advances, so far as this can be done. Generally arithmetic is taught with a sufficiency of practical illustrations, though sometimes there is a failure even here. For example, a young lady, reputed to be thoroughly skilled in mathematics, showed that her education in this branch was not sufficiently practical, by being unable to answer the following simple question, — If a square bedquilt has 400 square pieces in it, how many pieces are there on each side? In the teaching of algebra there has commonly been a great failure, in not giving the pupil a truly practical understanding of it. Bailey's Elements is quite an improvement in this respect upon the common run of text-books on algebra. It is in geometry that we have the greatest failure in practical application, and I would suggest that if some one would make an elementary book in which there shall be arranged the simplest points in geometry, with abundant practical illustrations, he would be a great benefactor to the young.*

Natural philosophy, as commonly taught, is not sufficiently illustrated from common phenomena. So, also, in chemistry, the processes of the laboratory are principally taught, when to the common learner the chemical actions that are going on all around us and within us should furnish the chief subjects for instruction. I often meet with exemplifications of the defects referred to in the teaching of these sciences. A young lady who had gone through with a book on natural philosophy, gazed with ignorant wonder as a gentleman made a dandelion stem act as a syphon, showing that her knowledge of the principle of the syphon was not of a practical character. Then as to chemistry, I have seldom met any young person, who, after going through a text-book, or attending a course of lectures, on this branch, could explain the chemistry of so common a thing as striking fire.

Very commonly pupils are given to understand that most of what they learn is useful simply in disciplining the mind. This is unsatisfactory, and it is not so far true as is commonly supposed. More of knowledge can be turned to practical use than is gene-

*[We recommend to our contributor, and to our readers, to examine the little books of Pres. Hill, of Harvard College.]

rally thought. This can be shown to the pupil by practical applications, and at the same time he can be profitably told that there are more to be met with hereafter. One of the great benefits of such a book on Geometry as I have suggested would be, the connecting in his mind of practical results with the long succession of propositions which he would afterwards go through with in Euclid.

It is obvious that the knowledge which can be most used should be most largely communicated. Especially should this rule apply when the plan of education extends over but a few years. Tried by this rule, arithmetic has now altogether too much prominence. It is well that all should be accurate in figures, but great agility in them is specially useful only to those who are to be accountants. To those who are going into the arts and trades (and of such there is a majority) a knowledge of natural science would be much more profitable practically than skill in arithmetic.

I had intended to dwell at some length on the utterance or communication of knowledge, as one of its prominent uses, but on this I must be content with throwing out a few hints. This is a use which touches all the intercourse of men, whether public or private, and is a source of such abundant and multiform influences that it surely should be well taken care of in education. The way in which one expresses himself, or in other words the method in which he communicates his knowledge, has vastly more to do with his influence and success in life than is commonly supposed. And yet comparatively little attention is paid to this point in the training of our schools or even our colleges. Seldom is a pupil corrected as to his forms of expression. These may be ill-shaped, whenever he departs from the exact words of the text-book in his recitation. They may be ungrammatical, though he learns rules enough in grammar to keep him straight, if that would do it. But the grammar and the model furnished by the text-book do not suffice. It needs the watchful, correcting guidance of the teacher, but this is seldom applied. Much less is there commonly any training of the pupil in making well-arranged statements, or in giving lucid descriptions, either verbal or written. The results of the prevalent neglect in these particulars may be strikingly seen

in the incorrect and bungling expressions so often used in the written answers to questions propounded in examinations, and in the want of proper sequence of ideas and statements in compositions.

There is one glaring fact which I cannot forbear to notice here in regard to our colleges and theological seminaries. While the student is trained in writing to some extent, he is not trained at all in extemporaneous speaking, but this is left to chance or to practice in the societies.

I would conclude my hints on this subject with saying, that, as there is much talking to be done in the world, in both business and common intercourse, it is worth while to be a good talker; and that much of the incoherent, wordy, and misplaced talking which we are obliged to hear might be got rid of, if education were made to bear in the right way upon this matter.

NEW HAVEN. W. H.

THE HALF-TIME SYSTEM.

The following are the letters of Mr. Edwin Chadwick and Prof. Owen referred to in our article on this subject in the last number of the TEACHER:

DEAR OWEN, — Permit me to submit to you for your consideration, and for my instruction, some questions on topics of observation made from time to time officially in the common practice of popular education, whether in the duration of sedentary attention which its theory requires it is not at variance with elementary principles of physiology.

First, let me observe upon the very young of our species, their mobility at the period of growth, particularly in infancy — their constant changes of bodily position when free to change — their incessant desire for muscular exertion — their changes, short at first, longer as growth advances — these changes being excited by quickly varying objects of mental attention, and forming incessantly varying alternations of exertion and repose, with manifestations of

pleasure when allowed free scope for them — of pain when long restrained. Now, to what physiological conditions do these alternations of exertion and repose subserve?

When obstructed and subjected to constraints for long periods, and when pain and mental irritation and resistance are excited amongst *classes*, are not the pain and resistance to be taken as a remonstrance of nature against a violation of its laws?

The theory and the common practice of school instruction require five and as much as six hours' quietude, and for intervals of three hours each, perfect muscular inactivity and stillness of very young and growing children from seven to ten years old, and during this constrained muscular inactivity continuous mental attention and labor.

To endure these conditions of continued bodily inactivity and prolonged mental labor the common office of the schoolmaster is everywhere a war for the repression of resistances and incipient rebellions. But are not these resistances excited by nature itself? Are not desk-cutting, whittling with knives, mischief, conditions of irritability, manifestations of excessive constraints against physiology? If the condition of muscular inactivity were completely enforced, what does physiology tell us may be expected from these restraints? I might ask you indeed, whether much of the insanitary conditions of our juvenile and very young populations are not consequences following from them.

First, there is the proverbial palefacedness of the young scholar and a lower bodily condition of those who are subject to the confinement of schools, even of the best construction and ventilation than of those who are free from them and at large, at liberty to follow natural instincts.

When the weakly fail in health, in a marked degree, the remedy is restoration to natural freedom which commonly leads to improved health. I cannot but attribute to the lowering of the system, and bodily debility produced by this excessive school restraint (even where there is good ventilation), and the consequent exposure to epidemic conditions and other passing causes of disease, a large share of our juvenile mortality, especially between seven and ten years of age, when the opportunities of retrieving

the effects of the school constraints by athletic exercises are less than at later periods. . . . .

What I seek is the sanction of your opinion as to whether if the laws of physiology be duly consulted for providing a sound body for a sound mind, other treatment is needed than that which prevails in schools of requiring five or six hours of sedentary occupation for children in the infantile stage, and seven or eight for those in the juvenile stage.

MY DEAR CHADWICK,—

I have perused and carefully considered every point in the inquiry which you have addressed to me, and I concur completely with your belief in the agreement with nature of the changes you recommend in the distribution and change of the periods devoted to school restraint and studies, and to bodily exercise and relaxation.

All the nutritive functions and actions of growth proceed more vigorously and rapidly in childhood and youth than in mature life, not merely as regards the solids and ordinary fluids, but also in the production of those imponderable and interchangeable forces which have sometimes been personified as "nervous fluid," "muscular force," etc. Using the latter term to exemplify my meaning, the excess of nervous force is in the child most naturally and healthily reduced by its conversion into muscular force; and at very short intervals during the active or waking period of life the child instinctively uses its muscles and relieves the brain and nerves of their accumulated force, which passes by the intermediate contraction of the muscular fibre into ordinary force of motion, exemplified by the child's own movements, and by those of some object or other which has attracted its attention.

The tissues of the growing organs, brain, muscles, etc., are, at this period of life, too soft to bear any long continuance of their proper actions; their fibres have not attained to mature tone and firmness; this is more especially the case with the brain-fibre. The direct action of the brain as in the mental application to learning soon tires; if it be too long continued, the tissues are unhealthily affected; the due progress of growth which should have

resulted in a fibre fit for good and continuous labor at maturity is interfered with; the child as an intellectual instrument is to that extent spoiled by an error in the process by which that instrument was sought to be improved.

The same effect on the muscular system is exemplified in the racers that are now trained to run at two and one-half or three years old for the grand prizes at Doncaster or Epsom. The winner of the Derby never becomes an "Eclipse" or "Flying Childers" because the muscular system has been overwrought two or three years before it could have arrived at its full development, which development is stopped by the premature over-exertion.

If the brain be not stimulated to work, but is allowed to rest, and if, at the same time, the muscles be forbidden to act, then there arises, if this restraint be too prolonged, an overcharged state of the nervous system. It is such a state as we see exemplified in the caged quadrupeds of active habits, where it seeks to relieve it by converting the nervous into the muscular force to the extent permitted by its prison, either executing a succession of bounds against the prison-bars like the agile leopard, or stalking like the lion sullenly to and fro.

If the active child be too long prevented from gratifying its instinctive impulse to put in motion its limbs or body the nervous system becomes overcharged, and the relief may at last be got by violent emotions or acts called passion or "naughtiness," ending in the fit of crying and flood of tears.

But all the impediments to a healthy development of the nervous system might be obviated by regulations based on the system which you rightly advocate, providing for more frequent alternations of labor and rest, of study and play, of mental exertion and muscular exercise; in other words, by briefer and more frequent periods allotted to its phases of educational procedure and modified to suit two or three divisions of the scholars, according to age.

The powers and workings of the human frame concerned in the complex acts and influences which you have asked me to explain physiologically, are amongst the most recondite and difficult in our science; you will therefore comprehend and excuse my shortcomings in trying to fulfil your wish. But on the main point, I

have no doubt that your aim is in close accordance with the nature of the delicate, and for good or evil, easily impressible organization of the child.

Believe me ever truly yours,

RICHARD OWEN.

To the above interesting letter from Mr. Chadwick's article in the Transactions of the British Association, we subjoin a few short passages from his equally interesting volume entitled "A Letter to N. W. Senior, Esq., &c.," printed by the Education Commission, regretting that want of space prevents us from drawing more largely from its pages, and from the striking body of evidence that accompanies it.

"The experience of the short-school-time district industrial schools" he says (p. 19) "as displayed in such evidence as that which I have collected and transmitted (referring to an octavo volume of 200 pages) is demonstrative of a general conclusion that by the administrative division of educational labor, the elements of popular education, reading well with some skill in parsing, writing a fair hand, spelling well, arithmetic up to decimal fractions, the naval and the military drill, and vocal music may be taught well, together with the elements of religious instruction, in about one-half the time now commonly occupied in teaching indifferently the three elementary branches, as they are considered, of a popular education. It is found that beginning with the infant school, these courses of mental and bodily accomplishments may generally be completed soon after the tenth year." . . . .

"The gain in time from six or five to three hours of daily school attendance and from six to three years — half the time now commonly occupied — is not the sole or the most important gain achieved in the large schools by the division of educational labor and the application of the half-time principle. A boy who has acquired the same amount of knowledge in one-half the time of another boy must have obtained a proportionately superior habit of mental activity. This is the experience stated by employers of labor in good half-time school districts who have ceased to employ "long-timers" when they can get "short-timers." . . . . The mental

habits of listless attention prolonged beyond periods in which it is psychologically possible to obtain voluntary and profitable attention from children, the mental habits of "dawdling," of useless waiting, which the common school-teaching during long hours communicates, are highly pernicious and economically wasteful, more especially for those who have to gain their own livelihood." . . . . "No such proportion of the boy pupils who have gone through the course of instruction in a half-time district pauper school could be plucked for bad spelling and bad ciphering as have been plucked of young gentlemen candidates for direct commissions in the army. I have had the pauper children in these schools tried with the questions proposed to candidates for clerkships in the War Office, and as large a proportion of clever answers was got from these boys under thirteen as would probably be obtained from the older actual candidates for clerkships. The younger Eton scholars could not stand an examination in the lower elements of instruction with the pauper children who have gone through this course."

"I quite agree with Mr. Paget (p. 78) when he states that the half-time principle is one which admits of very wide application, and that 'our middle classes might give their sons up to the age of twenty an alternation of a day of college and gymnastic exercises, with a day in the counting-house, and thus, with God's blessing, confer upon them that inestimable boon, a sound mind embodied in a healthy frame.'"

The conclusions which Mr. Chadwick draws from the results of his investigations are stated by him at very considerable length. We will quote some of those which seem of the most immediate practical importance. He concludes that "as relates to the general population, the usual courses of school teaching which require five or six hours of mental effort from very young children of the average ages taught, from the seventh to the tenth year and above, in the common elementary schools is largely in excess of their capacity of attention at those years, and in violation of the laws of psychology:" "that the present excessive duration of sedentary application required from little children beyond their proved capacity of voluntary and profitable attention is mentally injurious by inducing associations of weariness and disgust with the matters

taught, by creating comparatively diffused, slow, and dilatory habits of mind, often provoking corporal chastisement:" . . . . "that whilst the practice in good half-time schools, of three hours' mental effort daily, is proved to be adapted to the natural capacity of young children of from seven to eleven or twelve years of age, as a provision obligatory on those engaged in productive labor it is proved to act beneficially as a security against bodily overwork; all bodily as well as mental labor for young and growing children, if continued during the same length of hours as grown adults, being a source of deterioration to the laboring population of the country:" . . . . "That by teaching on a large scale and on the half-time system the period for imparting superior elementary knowledge and bodily as well as mental aptitudes may be reduced from an average period of six years to an average of three, and (including the cost of bodily training) at an expense for educational power of less than one half the present expense of the common education:" "That the same educational power and the same schools may be extensively applied to the training of double sets of children, either on the same days or on alternate days, as may be most convenient for the demands of domestic service or productive industry, or of thinly populated rural districts, and popular education be conciliated with the demands for the industrial service of children."

The experiments and conclusions of Mr. Chadwick, though drawn from a state of things in many respects very different from that existing in our own country, may, we think, well induce us to consider whether we also may not derive valuable hints from them. The question arises whether we take a sufficiently wide and liberal view of the true objects of popular education, — whether that should be made to consist solely in book-learning or whether the training of the senses of children and the development of their bodily organs are not equally necessary parts of a sound education, — whether, as an instrument in training the bodily senses, instruction might not be given that should be a valuable preparation for the arts and trades which so many of the pupils will make the occupations of their lives, or for the girls, instruction in those domestic duties in respect to which the girls of this

generation are growing up so lamentably deficient, — or if it is impossible, under our system to accomplish all this *in school*, whether the mere book-learning cannot be compressed by a better teaching and better arrangements into a much shorter time,— (the possibility of which Mr. Chadwick we think has abundantly proved) leaving time for those other essentials of a really good training to be acquired even from a very early age in other ways, — whether, in short, the long school hours and the incessant devotion of children to books is not after all based on mere unreasoning custom. It is a noticeable fact that a very large proportion of the foremost men of this country may be said to have been educated on the half-time system; for they were farmers' sons whose whole book education consisted in attendance on a winter country school. [Ed.

Since writing the above article we have received the following interesting communication in corroboration of our views, from a gentleman who we are sure will pardon us for mentioning his name, in consideration of the added weight it will give his testimony, the Rev. C. F. Foster, Chaplain of the State Almshouse, at Tewksbury. We are glad to find ourselves in error in the statement that no experiments of the kind we have been detailing have ever been tried on this side of the ocean. Mr. Foster says:

"The views presented in the article upon 'the half-time system' are so exactly in accordance with what I have seen of its practical working, that I venture to offer a few thoughts which were suggested while listening to the reading of the paper referred to, at the meeting of the Association. In one point, the author has made a mistake. He is, doubtless, not aware that the experiment is now being tried on a small scale, in Massachusetts, and that the view is not therefore, as he states, still a mere *theory* in this country. In one of the public charitable institutions of this State, comprising a school of nearly two hundred pupils, this plan in its general outline has been pursued during the past two years. The circumstances which gave rise to the experiment, were the opposite of those which he there urges as a reason for making such a system universal. It was found in the present instance that children were constantly leaving the school with a three months' certificate,

which would nominally allow them to work in the factories one year, but which actually, by an evasion of the law, gave them license to remain out of the reach of all educational influences thenceforth and forever. Others were transferred by poor parents, or the State authorities to families, where hard service was required as paramount in importance to any mental training that the child might receive.

To meet this difficulty, i. e. to furnish better facilities for study, — not to correct a tendency to too much confinement, — it was proposed to retain children in the institution of which we are speaking, two years at least, and divide their time between manual labor and study. The plan has been carried into effect, and so far quite satisfactorily. The boys are apprenticed to a useful trade, the girls are employed in sewing, knitting, braiding straw, binding shoes, &c. The forenoons are passed in school, while the afternoons are occupied in these departments of labor. In this way the time daily spent in study and recitations by the fifty children thus employed is but three hours. I speak on good authority, when I say that the result is in accordance with all that has been claimed by the writer of the article on this subject.

Previous to the change of system, an apathy was observed among those scholars who had been constant attendants for a considerable time. This was obviously the consequence of a want of relaxation. Subsequently the same pupils, when they were put to work half the time, seemed to acquire a fresh impetus in the performance of the whole round of duty, and to display an increasing interest in their studies.

Considerable judgment is necessary, indeed, on the part of the teacher in so economizing the time, that none of the branches of a true education shall be crowded out of notice. Three hours a day is insufficient for thorough recitations in every department which ought to receive the attention of children from twelve to fifteen years of age. The only alternative is to assign certain studies to particular days, giving recitations in arithmetic, for example, four times a week, in geography twice, in grammar twice, in reading, writing, spelling, &c., three or four times, according to

the advancement of the pupils. This has been the method pursued in the experiment to which we refer.

It will be seen that the advantages of the plan in this instance are to be estimated in two directions: first, by a comparison of the mental training of these children, with the scanty privileges of those who are left to pick up what knowledge they can, while working in the factory, or living out; and second, by a comparison of the attainments of those who alternately work and study, with the rank of those who are a longer time each day in school. Concerning the former, there can be no doubt, and of the latter it may be enough to say, that many who have had the benefit of this system, now stand far in advance of others with whom they stood side by side two years ago.

How the arrangement is to become of universal application, remains a question. In public institutions, and large boarding schools where manual labor is not regarded as a disgrace, the plan is a feasible one. It might also be introduced in connection with manufacturing establishments where children are employed, by means of appropriate legislation. We hope that such a reform may be accomplished."

OUR "TEACHER."

It was once my fortune to be chosen at a meeting of one of our County Teachers' Associations, an agent to present the claims of the *Teacher* to the teachers in the town where I was then employed, and to receive from them subscriptions to our journal. My success, however, was not unqualified. Everywhere I was met with the question, "Of what *use* is it?" In vain I represented to one and another that it was, or is, a professional periodical, designed to be to the teacher what the surgical, medical, dental, and legal journals are to their respective practitioners. The reply was virtually something like this: "That is all very well; but the *Teacher* does not sustain that argument. These other journals are to a great extent eminently practical, giving information as to

diseases and their cures, instancing special cases and detailing the successful treatment, but in the *Teacher* we have found very little of this. Most of the articles are general in their character, and not specific enough to enable us to apply them to our own situations, or to assist us in overcoming the daily difficulties which meet us in our work of instruction and discipline. The medical journals state particular cases, note their important features, and not only tell that mild measures or severe ones were adopted, but state just what those measures were, just what medicine was given, how much and how often, just how a shattered limb was treated, or an important operation in dentistry performed. And so the legal journals give detailed accounts of trials, the arguments pro and con, the interpretation of the laws by the court, and the prominent points in the decision of the jury. Not so the *Teacher;* in it we find rather suggestions of what should be done or might be done, and that stated in a general way, than statements of what has been successfully tried, and the *modus operandi.* In a word, its articles are often theoretical merely, and contain no assurance that any one has ever successfully tested them and proved their truth."

This opinion I have since found not to be confined to that town or those teachers, and it naturally suggests two inquiries; first, whether such is the fact; secondly, if so, whether it is an evil.

I am well aware that many teachers, very good teachers and very successful, strenuously maintain that such articles as these teachers desired would be of very little value. "Teaching," they say, "is not an imitative art; it cannot be learned from others; in so far as you copy another's methods, your teaching becomes mechanical and lifeless, a mere shell without the kernel." They readily admit, even claim, to be better teachers than they were five, ten, or twenty years ago; they have learned much from their own experience, but from the successes or failures of others they claim that almost nothing can be learned.

I must confess myself unable to appreciate the force of these ideas. While to a great extent teaching is not an imitative art, to a great extent also it is one. There are methods in school-keeping as well as in anything else. No one, evidently, however "apt

to teach" in a technical sense, would succeed well in keeping school, if he had never seen or known of one, but had received all his instruction from his earliest years from a private teacher, who had avoided everything school-like. There are a thousand little ways and means which one teacher may learn from others, so simple, many of them, that, like many inventions, we wonder why we had not thought of them before, and find them as valuable as they are simple. To know and understand a thing himself is, confessedly, not enough in a teacher: he must also know how to impart this knowledge to others. May he not by seeing this done learn a method for himself? May he not also learn much in the matter of discipline by knowing how others control their schools? Doubtless, a capable lad provided with proper tools might, without exactly learning the trade, learn, in time, to build something in the way of a house, but would this be the best way to learn, and does anybody desiring to become a superior carpenter refrain from "learning the trade" (*i. e.*, imitating other previous carpenters), for fear of becoming "simply mechanical"? Does not his having learned the trade tend to assist and develop his ingenuity? And is teaching so simple or so exceptional, that what one does not think of himself, cannot be suggested by or learned from others?

No one, I suppose, will deny that a mere monkey-like imitation would be almost unavailing; but many, I think, will maintain, from their own experience, that imitation, combined with judgment and common sense, is highly valuable.

This, however, must not be confounded with mere theorizing upon what might be done in supposed cases. Normal scholars, who have pursued some such exercise during their course of study, often find many of their theories quite impracticable when tested by actual trial in the school-room. Often, doubtless, this is owing to defects in the supposed premises, often to attempting to follow too unvaryingly some really good rule, which ought properly to be adapted to the circumstances of each case. But this does not affect the general principle, that a course or method successfully practised by one teacher may be adopted by another with highly advantageous results.

Without, therefore, offering an opinion as to whether our *Teacher*

is deficient in practical articles, it may be suggested that such articles, while they might be carelessly or scornfully regarded by older teachers, with a "That's nothing new," or "I never used any other method," or "Who didn't know that?" may prove to younger and less experienced, though ambitious teachers, stepping-stones to new and higher excellence.

In accordance with the above ideas, I venture to close this communication with a practical suggestion on a matter very old to many teachers, very simple, and yet one which I have found many teachers had not thought of. I, indeed, copied it from a Boston school, and have found it very advantageous. And, as a closing remark, I would express the sincere desire that some one who dissents from the views above expressed upon learning from others to keep school, will not fail to make some reply. The practical suggestion is in regard to "Recitation Cards." In many schools, it is customary to have the name or number of each scholar written upon a small card, and to use these cards in hearing recitations, the teacher asking a question, and calling upon the scholar, whose card may be uppermost, to answer, and so on, till all have been called one or more times. Some teachers simply ask the questions, and have one of the class call the cards, or *vice versâ*. The latter way is good if the teacher wishes to walk about the room, and the recitation-book is inconvenient to carry.

Some of the advantages of this system are, that it stimulates attention, since, as no one knows who is to answer next, all must be ready; that it distributes the questions evenly (for, otherwise, one is apt, calling promiscuously, to call on some several times, and on others not at all), and that thus an account of the recitation may be easily kept; the cards of the scholars who have not failed, and of those who have failed once, twice, etc., being placed in separate piles.

* *

A SCOTCH SCHOOLMASTER.

We met some time ago with a little book which we had hoped before this to see reprinted; but as, for some reason, no enterprising publisher has seen fit to take hold of it, though much less valuable books are reproduced every day, we want by giving some account of it, accompanied by extracts, to impart to our readers some of the amusement and instruction we have received from it. It is entitled, "Day Dreams of a Schoolmaster," by D'Arcy W. Thompson, now Professor of Greek in Queen's College, Galway, but formerly for many years a very successful classical teacher in one of the great public schools of Edinburgh. The author is a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, a gentleman and not a pedant, a thorough classical scholar, and yet one who dares expose the stupid absurdities of the old traditional methods of classical instruction. He has written a little book which every lover of rote-learning and unreasoning routine will hate, but which every one who has any sense for what the art of teaching might become will gratefully accept. Though chiefly occupied with subjects connected with classical instruction, the book has many admirable hints on other educational topics, and is withal so wise, and genial, and witty, that it is really quite unique in educational literature.

The author begins with giving us an account of his own school days at the great school of "St. Edward."

"I was not quite seven and a half years old when my dear mother was presented with a free admission for myself, her eldest son, to the Grammar School of St. Edward. The offer was too valuable an one to admit of refusal. I was accordingly prepared for admission to my new home by having my hair somewhat closely shorn and by being clothed in a long blue gown, not of itself ungraceful, but opening in front so as to disclose the ridiculous spectacle of knee-breeched yellow-stockinged legs. After some laughter at my disguise, and much weeping at my banishment, I bade good bye to my dear mother. We little thought at the time that school was to be my home for twelve long years.

"The day after my entry into this colossal institution, a Latin Grammar was placed into my hands. It was a bulky book of its kind — considering the diminutiveness of the new student a portentously bulky book. It was bulky in consequence of its comprehensiveness. It gave all imaginable rules and all

imaginable exceptions. . . . . Over a space of years we went systematically through that book, page after page, chapter after chapter. It was all unintelligible, all obscure; but some spots were wrapped in more than ordinary gloom. Our chronic bewilderment was varied from time to time by shooting pains brought on by some passage or expression unusually indigestible. We read of creatures, happily few in number, that went about in the Epicoene Gender. Were they fish, flesh or fowl? Would the breed be ever extinct? Under certain desperate circumstances a participle and a noun together were bound hand and foot and put into the Ablative Absolute. What had they done to be treated in a manner thus peremptory, unreasonable, crotchety? Did they ever get out after being once put in? Then there were Gerunds in *Di*, *Do*, *Dum*. How they recalled to us that old *Fee*, *Fi*, *Fo*, *Fum*, and the smell of English blood! and Supines in *um* and *u*. What was the meaning of these cabalistic names! I did not know then and I do not know now. And yet I have been behind the scholastic curtain for twelve long years."

There was no entire chapter in the book more broken with pitfalls than that composed in doggerel which treats of the rules for gender. Not one word I am sure, of an exceptionable kind, had escaped the diabolic ken of the compiler. String upon string of jangling, unmusical lines could we repeat with a singular rapidity, understanding nothing, asking no questions. Oh, the sweet simple faith of childhood! We had been told to commit those lines to memory, and we committed them. They would doubtless do us good in the latter days. We should at all events be flogged then and there unless we sang them like caged birds. It was the will of Allah! Allah was good!"

Our author arrives in due course at the mysteries of Latin versification. He confesses to having made as his share more than two thousand hexameters, besides alcaics innumerable; and of his skill he gives the reader an opportunity to judge by some translations from Tennyson. But his opinion of the educational value of the process may be gathered from the following passage:

Latin versification was imperative in all, and was continued through the senior classes, whether a pupil's bent of mind were for language or science, for verse or prose. To a very few — in which minority, perhaps, I was myself included — it was an amusement, and would have been prosecuted with pleasure, had its study been optional. . . . . I had a stock of preludes, similes, and perorations, stored away in the pigeon-holes of my brain. Unlike the simple ancients, my forte lay in landscape. I had an extensive assortment of sleeping lakes that mirrored heaven, the emblems of quiet souls; of winds, that rustled over peaceful seas; of suns that went down with difficulty through washes of superfluous paint. One sunset I have by me still. It is so gorgeously out of all simple and severe taste, that, could I forget my own handiwork, I should attribute it to the pencil of a Ruskin. As the prelude to an ode on *Lucretia*, it gained me a prize in books at school; as the prelude to an ode on *The Moors in Spain*, it gained

me a gold medal at Cambridge. I could with ease adapt it, if required, for a peroration to an ode on the *Exhibition of all Nations*. But my prose comrades formed an overwhelming majority. Latin versifying was to them a bugbear more appalling than any yet encountered. How tough-grained soever might be their idiosyncrasies of intellect — and, in many cases, the grain was very tough indeed — the wood was tapped for the regular supply of sap. Great importance was attached to the subject; and still is at all great English schools. I have not the remotest idea why. . . . . Our apprenticeship to the Latin muses lasted for about two years. Your kitten may reach his full intellectual powers in a few months; but it takes time to form an elephant or a poet. I subjoin a few sets of quasi-arranged lines.

We had probably transferred to Latin verse some thousands of similar sets, before we spread our wings for original flights.

THE HORSE.

The fiery steed, his tail in air proudly cock'd,
Not without much neighing traverses glad pastures.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

To thee, O Alexander — learn, O ye kings, being admonished —
Glory having been attained, Bacchus was a sad end.

The bee from various flowers sips sweetest honey;
Speckled as to little body and yellow as to double legs:
We, too, gather honey on Parnassus, a boyish crowd,
Yellow as to legs and cærulean as to flowing robe.

When duly prepared for more adventurous effort, we were set to practise upon all the heroes and sages of antiquity.

We cannot follow our author through all his admirable suggestions in regard to teaching languages, or undertake to criticise all his notions respecting Latin grammar; but we cordially agree with the following estimate of the ordinary method of teaching:

The whole system, and the elementary part most of all, is bookish, unpractical. It is many years — nay, very often it does not happen at all — it is many years, at all events, before a lad suspects that Latin and Greek are instruments of thought precisely similar to his own everyday language. In the earlier years of his apprenticehood, he would almost scout the idea as profane, that men could under any circumstances exchange chit-chat, write love-letters, deliver after-dinner speeches, tell Joe Millers, make bad puns in such solemn and stiff-jointed forms of speech. *Indeed, they never strike him as forms of speech, at all.* He may entertain a hazy idea that Latin was employed by a Roman tradesman for composing an Elegiac valentine, or an advertisement in Alcaics.

Its grammatical nomenclature is worded differently from that of any modern tongue; and that for Greek is worded more cabalistically still. He meets with no Aorists in English, no Supines in French, no Gerunds in German; no Paulo-post-futures anywhere in the habitable world. And yet I will venture to say, that there are very few idioms of either Greek or Latin that have not their analogues in homely Saxon and pure French. Indeed, I am almost inclined to think that the use of ἄν in Greek is the only idiom to which it would be difficult or impossible to adduce a parallel.

Why on earth, then, are the former pair swathed in a verbiage so peculiar? I can understand the use of a peculiar nomenclature in days when the theory of language was imperfectly understood; and I freely acknowledge the debt of gratitude due to the old grammarians for raising the structure before us, with the scanty materials at their disposal. Latin was then considered as radically different from Greek as Greek from Coptic, ay, and might be considered so now, for all the teaching in our schools. The magnificent, cloud-dispelling discoveries of Bopp and the Grimms, so full of interest if *gradually* and clearly expounded, to young and old alike, are in most class-rooms practically ignored. We still separate by arbitrary boundaries studies that we know, or should know, to be cognate. If Latin, Greek, and Teutonic are really sisters, and French a daughter of one of them, why should it be thought impossible to teach them all upon some catholic plan? At the very least, the grammatical terms employed in one school-room might be employed in another.

Take, for instance, such a simple sentence as, *I should like to know*. If a boy were called upon to parse such a sentence in three consecutive class-rooms, he would find a Conditional mood in the French room, a Subjunctive one in the Latin, and an Optative one in the Greek. A very Proteus of a mood, now a bear, now crackling fire, now running water, that slips through one's fingers.

I am convinced in my own mind that it would be practicable to teach English, French, German, Latin, and Greek on a broad and catholic system.

We know not what our classical friends will say to his treatment of that well-known rule of syntax which begins in "Andrews and Stoddard," "The name of a town in which anything is said to be or to be done, if of the first or second declension and singular number," &c. He says:

If this rule were correct in substance, it would seem to indicate as much coherence in Latin syntax as in the dreams of a maniac. After swallowing such a bolus of indigestibility, we might safely bolt anything, brace-buttons, tee-totums, corkscrews. I venture to suggest some analogues.

An active-transitive verb governs an accusative case, if the verb be of the first conjugation, and the noun of the fourth declension and of the feminine gender; otherwise, the verb may govern any case, or no case, as you please.

An adjective agrees with its noun in gender, number, and case; excepting in the case of feminine nouns defective in the singular, and irregular in their habits.

I have an idea of publishing a cookery book on the same principles of unreason. The following receipt I quote as an anticipatory advertisement:—

To make an apple-pie, you will compose the interior of currant-jam, if the pie be made on Wednesday, and the weather out of doors be windy; but of soap-suds, if it be your washing-day, and the dish be of the willow pattern.

However, reader, the fault is ascribable not to Latin, but to the exponents of its grammar.

But although the greater part of the book is occupied with suggesting in this amusing way most sensible improvements in classical teaching, there are also other topics not less admirably handled. We recommend the chapter on teaching girls.

We cannot omit the following touching allusion to his lost wife:

Women have just as keen intelligence as men; less power, may-be, of abstract reasoning; but far finer perceptive and linguistic faculties. They need not be trained to exhaustive scholarship; but refinement of mental culture suits them, perhaps, even more than it does our own sex.

I imagine that the Lady Jane, who read her Phaedo when the horn was calling, had as pretty a mouse-face as you ever saw in a dream; and I am sure that gentle girl was a better scholar than any lad of seventeen is now in any school of England or Scotland.

And once upon a time, reader — a long, long while ago — I knew a schoolmaster; and that schoolmaster had a wife. And she was young, and fair, and learned; like that princess-pupil of old Ascham; fair and learned as Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother. And her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low, reader: an excellent thing in woman. And her fingers were quick at needlework and nimble in all a housewife's cunning. And she could draw sweet music from the ivory board; and sweeter, stranger music from the dull life of her schoolmaster husband. And she was slow of heart to understand mischief, but her feet ran swift to do good. And she was simple with the simplicity of girlhood, and wise with the wisdom that cometh only of the Lord — cometh only to the children of the Kingdom.

And her sweet, young life was as a morning hymn, sung by child-voices to rich organ-music. Time shall throw his dart at Death, ere Death has slain such another.

For she died, reader, a long, long while ago. And I stood once by her grave; her green grave, not far from dear Dunedin. Died, reader, for all she was so fair and young, and learned, and simple, and good.

And I am told it made a great difference to that schoolmaster.

We cannot help repeating our wish that the whole of the agreeable little book may be reprinted.—[ED.

Editor's Department.

Articles intended for the next No. of the *Teacher* to secure insertion, must in all cases be handed in before the 15th of the current month.

Through the kindness of our friends, we can no longer complain of an "empty literary treasury;" we shall rather have to ask the indulgence of contributors when they find that in the exercise of our best discretion, we are obliged to *select* from their favors, those which seem to us most likely to interest the readers of the *Teacher*. What with original contributions, and what with selected matter that we want to print, we shall begin to wish that our little periodical were double its present size. If its friends will exert themselves to double its subscription list, we will try to give them a larger measure of good things.

We have received a copy of the Report of a Special Committee of the Boston School Board appointed to consider the subject of the duties of Masters of Grammar Schools. It is from the pen of Rev. R. C. Waterston, and embodies a cogent recommendation of a change proposed by J. D. Philbrick, Esq., the accomplished Superintendent, which seems to us one of the most important steps in progress that has yet been suggested. No one familiar with school management can be unaware of the immense loss occasioned by want of uniformity of system, how much the success of a set of schools depends on uniformity of plan and perfect connexion one with another. The extreme opposite of this was seen under the old system, now happily abolished, by which the Primary Schools of Boston were kept distinct from the other schools and managed by an entirely distinct Board. Mr. Philbrick proposes to take another step in the right direction, by releasing the Head Masters of the Grammar Schools from a part of the care of their special classes, to enable them to exercise a greater amount of supervision over the lower classes of their own schools; and he proposes also, the still more important step of putting the Primary Schools of their District under their supervision, that thus the influence of the Masters may no longer be so much confined to a minority of older pupils, and that a complete uniformity of plan and purpose may reign from the lowest to the highest classes.

When it is considered that there are now in the Public Schools of Boston, nearly 30,000 children, under the charge of more than 600 teachers, and that most of the teachers are females, many of them young and inexperienced, it will be seen what an important step this is, and how much more useful the services of an experienced and accomplished head Master may be when employed to control and regulate *all* the teaching of his department, than when confined to the teaching of a few older scholars. No one at all acquainted with the masters of

the Boston Grammar Schools, will doubt that they are fully qualified for this enlarged sphere of duty, and we trust that no obstacle will hinder the realization of this excellent improvement in our school system.

A correspondent, in Chicago, writes to inform us that $600 has been established as the maximum salary of female assistant teachers; and $700 as that of head assistants. The salaries for male teachers are not yet up to the Boston standard.

The National Social Science Association held its first regular meeting in the Hall of the Lowell Institute, in Boston, in December. The weather was unfavorable, and the attendance was not large, but the papers read were most of them of great interest. Two were read on Education; one by President Hill, of Harvard College, on the Problems of Education, and the other by Prof. Atkinson, on the system of Competitive Examinations for the English Civil Service. From Dr. Hill's excellent address, we hope in another number to be able to find room for a few passages bearing upon that necessity for experiment and observation in the Art of Education, of which we spoke in our last number.

From a communication to the Christian Register, from the Rev. Charles Brooks, we learn that he is laboring earnestly at Washington for the promotion of his scheme for a Central Bureau of Education. For the details and arguments for his plan, we refer our readers to his tract on the subject, published by the Loyal Publication Society.

MEETING AT THE EDUCATIONAL ROOM.

Mr. STONE of Newton in the chair.

Mr. CHASE of Watertown was chosen Chairman of the next meeting.

Practical exercises were then given by Messrs. FORBUSH of West Roxbury and CHASE of Watertown. The subject of the former was — Interest. That of the latter — Grammar.

Mr. CHASE remarked that Grammar was almost universally considered the most dry and uninteresting of studies; and that this opinion must be attributed to the nature of the study, or the manner in which it was taught. We had no right to decide that it was the former till we had done as much to present this subject in a familiar manner, as we have to render interesting the other branches of common school instruction.

That this had not yet been done, was illustrated by comparing the first questions in the Primary Arithmetics, with those in the Elementary Grammars. He was of the opinion that the two principal reasons why Grammar is thought so "dry," especially by beginners, were the following: — First, we do not give the pupil credit, as we should, for knowing a great deal of Grammar, though ignorant of its technicalities; and, we do not, therefore, as in arithmetic, use this knowledge to excite an interest in the study. Secondly, we thrust the bare technical terms forward at the beginning, as if the name were of the greatest

importance, instead of first making the thing itself clear to the pupil's apprehension, and then telling him the name by which it is called in grammar.

Mr. CHASE then explained a method pursued in his own school during the past seven years.

The pupils are taught orally from five to ten minutes each day during the first year, by means of questions similar to those in the Introductory Arithmetic, and now adopted in the best systems of Object-teaching; they then take the larger text-book and pursue the subject with an interest fully equal to that exhibited in Geography or Arithmetic.

The question appointed for discussion was, — How shall those scholars be educated who do not get their lessons?

The debate was opened by the Chairman, who remarked that, as his proposal of the question denoted, "he did not know how." They would be poorly enough educated at best. He did not consider it evidence of very skilful teaching that only half, or less than half of a teacher's pupils were well educated. Many would have educated themselves without the teacher. The true test of skill was, the amount achieved with those who would do little or nothing for themselves. There are scholars who *cannot* get their lessons. With such no great results can be produced. There were others who possessed talent enough, and still failed. They were simply asleep. They were active enough, outside of the school-room, but could not be brought to fix their attention on their studies. The question is — how to wake them. Nothing can be done by impatience. Scholars do not fail because they wish to. We must interest them.

Mr. HUBBARD, of Dorchester, asked if the gentleman meant to say that all scholars did their best.

Mr. STONE, replied that he did not. The reason however, why many were willing to fail was, that they were poorly taught, overworked, and discouraged.

Mr. BROWN, of Boston, (Bowdoin School,) said that he had that morning, eight failures in his class in Physiology. He ordered the delinquents to commit the lesson and recite it again on Monday morning. [Applause.] School-books alone were not enough. The fact that schoolhouses were built, and teachers hired, indicated that something was expected of those teachers. The chief labor must of course, be with those who are least capable of doing the work themselves. When the teacher illustrates a subject, some scholars comprehend him at once; others cannot be made to do so. It is not in them. Sometimes, when, after having done his best to make a point clear, he had found that a part of the class had failed to understand him, he had spoken impatiently. He had never done so, however, without fearing that he might have done some injustice. Some scholars, it is true, take no interest in their studies, and do not care if they fail. The question, however, would occur to him,—"could not even these be made to love their work if I were more faithful?" Assimilation should be the great object. Without this what was learned would be of no use. A teacher may explain never so well, but if he does not question the scholar minutely to make sure that he thoroughly understands him, the recitation is a failure. We are too apt to take it for granted that those scholars are well educated who are able to repeat our words. Our aim should be to present the subject to the

comprehension of our pupils. The reason why we can educate one better than another is, that there is a difference of genius among them. Who are the men that are leaders in the world? They are those who are gifted with genius in some particular direction. The teacher may have some such in his school. He should, therefore, beware of making their attainments a standard for the others. He had known many able men who were poor book-scholars. The fact was, their genius did not lie in the direction of books. When he was at school nothing whatever was done towards explaining anything. Everything was learned by rote. He had thoroughly learned Murray's Grammar, without knowing anything whatever about the subject. The first real light he got was from Smith's Grammar where it was treated with some skill. We should always begin with something the child thoroughly comprehends and proceed cautiously, never going beyond his depth. One great error often committed is, that of considering scholars stupid when they were only slow. These same scholars were apt to be solid-minded as well as slow, and when once under way, moved with greater momentum so to speak, than their quicker-witted companions.

Mr. PATTEN, of Dorchester, said that those who failed may be divided into two classes — those who were lazy, and those who made the effort but were unable to succeed. He did not believe that most of a teacher's time should be devoted to the dull scholars. The average ability of the school should be his guide. He believed in detaining pupils after school, not as a punishment, but that the teacher might give his whole attention to them.

Prof. MUNROE, of Boston, believed that the mind had its tastes as well as the body. Cannot we make the mental food palatable as well as the bodily?

Mr. JAMESON, of Boston, (Boylston School,) said that we should not be unkind to those whom we suppose to be dunces. The difficulty frequently was, that the scholar was not doing what he wanted to do; and, consequently, what he was fitted for. He once had a pupil who was generally looked upon as a dunce. Since leaving school, however, he had become famous as an ingenious mechanic. As soon as he was allowed to follow the bent of his own inclination, he showed rare ability. Such cases were common, and constrained us to respect dunces. There were those who were dunces simply from laziness. He had such a case in his own school at the present time. He recommended in such cases, in the words of the Committee's regulation, "such discipline as would be exercised by a kind and judicious parent in his family." [Laughter.] There was also another class — those who cannot get their lessons. How should they be treated? Several boys in his school failed to-day who had studied as faithfully as those who did not fail. The difference was evidently in something beyond the control of the boys. Such cases need encouragement. They should never be ridiculed.

Mr. PATTEN thought that altogether too much stress was laid upon what are termed "perfect recitations." We should not require nor expect uniformity. It was as unreasonable to expect two scholars to recite exactly alike, as to expect them to talk or think so. Different persons express the same thought in very different language. Scholars should be allowed the same liberty. It is useless

to contend for perfection especially if we make our own ideas the standard. All pupils will not see intellectually with equal clearness. We should accept this fact, and act accordingly.

Mr. Jameson related an incident to show that the fluency and readiness of an individual were not always the measure of their real ability. He once resided near a certain fort in Oregon. He there became acquainted with two officers — a Major and a Captain. The brilliant social qualities of the Major so impressed him that he always retained a vivid recollection of him. The Captain being a modest, retiring man, and not possessed of any shining traits, he had nearly forgotten, till circumstances recalled him to his memory. The silent Captain was now Lieut-General Grant.

Mr. Marble of Boston, (Chapman School,) was quite positive that he had, in the course of his experience, known stupid *boys* who also became stupid *men*. In fact, the exceptions to this rule were, like diamonds, seldom found. Those however who were constitutionally dull, should receive special attention from the teacher. This cannot be done where, as in the city schools, the classes are very large. Individual effort under such circumstances is out of the question; consequently the dull scholar receives no more attention than the bright one who needs it much less. For this reason he would advocate the employment of more teaching force in the Boston schools. He would have the stupid scholars placed under the special care of a first class teacher to be "waked up." If they possess any ability or desire to learn, it would then show itself. A great advantage in country schools is, that the classes being comparatively small, individual attention can be given in cases requiring it.

Mr. Russell, of Watertown, was the next speaker. The teacher, he said, should not only give special attention to the poorer scholars; he should try to ascertain what particular branch of study each one had a taste for, and teach that first. Mr. R. gave an instance of a boy who left his school as an incorrigible dunce, who afterwards became an enthusiastic student of Geology.

Mr. Kimball, of Boston, referred to what had been said in regard to punishing scholars for stupidity. He remarked that a scholar might be flogged in different ways — often more effectually by the tongue, than by the rod. Pungent remarks were often of great use in waking up a scholar. He knew a female teacher of whose judicious, yet scathing remarks, the boys stood more in awe than of corporal punishment.

Mr. Chase then announced the following as the question for discussion at the next meeting: "What is the best method of teaching Geography?"

Adjourned. GEO. K. DANIELL, Jr., *Secretary.*

INTELLIGENCE.

PERSONAL.

Miss Adela R. Poor, of Indianapolis, Ind., formerly of Dorchester, Mass., having been invited to take charge of a school in Columbus, Ohio, her salary has *again* been raised one hundred dollars, and she has decided to remain. Her

salary is now, therefore, the same as that of the head assistants in the Boston grammar schools, since the advance. We rejoice at every such indication that the services of good female teachers are beginning to be appreciated at something like their proper value.

BOOK NOTICES.

Physiology and the Laws of Health, for the use of Schools, Academies, and Colleges. By EDWARD JARVIS, M. D. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co. 1866. 12mo. pp. 427. $1.50.

We have received from our respected friend, the author, a copy of this work, sent at our own request, that we might bring it to the notice of our readers; so important do we consider the subject.

We have long been of opinion — an opinion which has been the result of much suffering from early ignorance of the laws of health — that this subject must he looked upon from a higher point of view than it ever has been, before it will have justice done it, and before its importance is fully recognized. When we consider how much of our power and usefulness to others, — how much of our capacity to do the duties we were put here to perform, depends upon good health, is it anything less than a solemn *religious* duty to see that this body of ours, the dwelling and the instrument of our spirits, is kept sound, and strong and whole? Is it not a sacrifice better than many prayers to make those efforts to restrain self-indulgence, to overcome laziness, give bones and muscles their rights, to practice temperance and moderation in all things — temperance intellectual as well as physical, in study as well as in eating and drinking, which are needful to accomplish this object? Is it not a duty God requires of us to husband for worthy uses that health he gives us? Yet how many who would not dream of squandering their money, or wasting their goods, fling away health as recklessly as if it were utterly worthless.

But in this artificial life we all lead, *knowledge* of the Laws of Health is absolutely needed; and we do not think our author exaggerates its importance as a branch of education. His plan of imparting it too, a *practical* subject, is plainly the right one for our common schools. His work is divided into seven parts, on Digestion and Food; on the Circulation of the Blood and Nutrition; on Respiration; on Animal Heat; on the Skin; on the Bones and Muscles; Exercise and Rest; and on the Brain and Nervous System; and every part is full of that practical wisdom for which its author is so distinguished. We heard, the other day, a veteran teacher, who had used it, call it the best school physiology extant. We commend it, and the subject of which it treats, to the attention of all our readers. [Ed.

We are indebted to the publisher, Mr. Geo. Coolidge for a copy of his useful and convenient little Boston Almanac for 1866, this being the thirty-first year of the publication. The present number besides National, State, County, and City Registers and a map of the city with the new boundaries of the wards,

contains the U. S. and also the *State* Constitution, and a number of wood-cut views of new and of old Boston: price 50cts.

The Belton Estate, a novel by Anthony Trollope. Harper's Library of Select Novels, No. 263, 8vo. pp. 140. Price 50 cts.

We have received from A. Williams & Co., the last of Mr. Trollope's always welcome stories, all of which we recommend to tired schoolmasters and schoolmistresses as the pleasantest of reading; and we do not know a pleasanter rest to the mind when relieved from wearying duties, than a few pages of a really good novel, though in that category we do not rank the "sensation" novels now so much in vogue. Mr. Trollope has a wonderful power of interesting us in the every-day doings and every-day talk of our English cousins over the water, and that implies the possession of faculties far higher than are necessary to describe mysterious highwaymen or interesting poisoners, while the result is far healthier reading.

LIST OF BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS RECEIVED.

First Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, to the Governor of Maryland. 8vo. pp. 86. Baltimore.

Annual Report of the School Committee of Chelsea.

Public Schools from the Doctor's point of view. [A brief and admirable report of a Special Committee of the Middlesex East District Medical Society, on a single sheet for distribution, signed by Dr. F. Winsor, and Dr. J. D. Mansfield, which we propose to print in our next No.]

The Value of Physical Science in the work of Education. An address at the laying of the Corner Stone of the Jenks Chemical Hall, at Lafayette College, by Rev. W. Henry Green, D. D., Professor in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J. Easton, Pa. 1865.

Catalogue of the New Jersey Classical and Scientific Institute for Young Ladies and Gentlemen, Hightstown, N. J. 1865.

Blackwood for December, from A. Williams & Co.

North British Review. [This is an interesting and valuable number; containing an elaborate article on Coleridge, by the author of the recent admirable article on Wordsworth, and also articles on Plato, on Pindar, German Novelists, Henry Taylor's Poems, the "Gothic," Renaissance in English Literature, and on the Cattle Plague.]

Register and Circular of the State Normal School, at Salem, Mass. [The number of pupils during the past term — *one hundred and twenty-four* — shows that the new Principal, so well known to the readers of the *Teacher*, is fully keeping up the reputation of this, one of the most excellent of the Massachusetts Public Schools.]

Nineteenth Annual Report of the Teachers of the State Reform School, at Westborough.

Catalogue of the West-Newton English and Classical School. [In this handsome pamphlet, Mr. Allen has not only printed the names of 163 pupils

now attending his flourishing and most successful school, but also the long roll of his former pupils, and an outline of his course of study. We notice particularly, the care and good judgment employed in the selection of text-books, and are glad to see this evidence of the continued success of the school.]

The Legal Profession in America: an Address before the Class of 1865, of the Department of Law of the University of Michigan, by E. O Haven, D.D., LL. D., President of the University, Ann Arbor, 1866. [An address delivered to the Senior Class, in a Law School, which numbers 260 students, while the Medical School of the same University of our vigorous young sister State, numbers 414 students; and the total number of students in all departments is 953!]

Twelfth Annual Report of the Inspectors of the State Alms-House at Tewksbury. [We are indebted to the Chaplain and Teacher in this Institution, for a valuable addition to one of our articles in the present number.]

Physiology and the Laws of Health, by Edward Jarvis, M. D. Noticed above.

The Belton Estate by Anthony Trollope. Noticed above.

Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago.

Tenth Semi-Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools of the City of Boston. [This is one of the documents that make us wish that the number of pages of our *Teacher* were larger, for we should like to take from it some account of the latest improvements in the schools of a city whose schools are always improving; and particularly of the admirable Training Department of the Girls' High and Normal School. We notice two additions to the teaching force of the City, the appointment of Prof. L. B. Munroe as teacher of Gymnastics and Vocal Training, and the introduction of Vocal Music into the Primary Schools under Mr. L. W. Mason. Mr. Philbrick's report is not wholly complimentary. His criticism of faults in the common mode of teaching arithmetic is excellent.]

Faust, eine Tragödie von Goethe. Erster Theil. Faust, a Tragedy by Goethe; first part with English Notes. Boston, S. R. Urbino, 12mo. pp. 200, $1.00.

Les Doigts de Fée, Comedie en cinq actes, par Mm. Scribe et Legouvé; with English Notes, by Ferdinand Bôcher, Professor of Modern Languages in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. College series of modern Plays, No. viii. Boston, S. R. Urbino, 12mo. pp. 111, 40 cents. [We propose to notice these and others of Mr. Urbino's excellent series of publications in foreign languages in our next number.]

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We thank our Chicago friend and our contemporary of the Pennsylvania School Journal, for their compliments and good wishes. Our Boston contributor's suggestions were good.

We have several communications on file, some of which will appear in our next No.